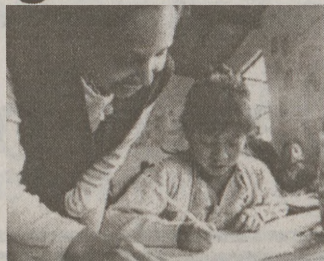


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Beat

Continued from page 7A

the current trend of "cash-money-hos" worship the industry is cranking out these days, and even from the teen-angst whines of many young groups in Coldplay's genre. Chris Martin, leading the vocals and on the piano, shows off more of his talents this time around than in the successful Grammy-winning album "Parachutes" (2001). Capitol Records knows this goldmine hasn't been drained.

The album cover and insert art is done in all black, white and gray, containing only two simple photos of the band and a stark cover illustration, but don't be fooled; the music is as colorful as any Van Gogh. With a broad vocal range faintly reminiscent of

Radiohead frontman Thom Yorke's, Martin sings poetically about concepts such as love just as passionately as he does about the sun in a track fittingly titled "Daylight." Maybe his soft, breathy voice has something to do with his recent marriage to actress Gwyneth Paltrow.

The lyrics of "A Rush of Blood to the Head" — the entire album, not just the namesake track that appears on it — are deep and penetrating. The are so eloquent are that one can't help being curious of the inspiration to star tracks such as "In My Place" and "The Scientist," a heartbreaking ode that hints at a mysterious mistake in a past relationship. "The Scientist's" backwards-playing music video received a Grammy nod for Best Short Form Music Video.

While some of the lyrics are so abstract and seemingly personal to the band that they beg for elaboration ("Come out in things I said / Shoot an apple off my head / A trouble that can't be named / A tiger's waiting to be tamed" in "Clocks"), any listener with an imaginative vein won't mind this exercise in creativity.

Rolling piano accompaniment and an enchanting melody define "Clocks," a track which shines above the rest and is worthy of its Grammy nomination for Best Record of the Year. After hearing this one, the rumor that circulated radio airwaves last March that Elton John spontaneously took the piano bench at a Manhattan bar to play this hit isn't hard to believe.

Though the songs are emotionally entrenched, Martin doesn't sound like he harbors the rage expressed by some of his contemporaries in rock; his vocals are soulful, sweet, and scream-free.

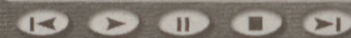
Martin and company will take the listener on a fascinating — and possibly introspective — journey with these 10 tracks, many of which can also be heard on the band's new "Live 2003" album and DVD, a collection of live tour recordings. "A Rush of Blood to the Head" is still an unforgettable album that should hold Coldplay in the top tier of alternative music.

— Julie Bon



Music Review V.2.002

Jay-Z Blueprint2 Roc-A-Fella-Records



This year's 46th Annual Grammy Awards will have a very competitive arrangement of talent. Musicians of all genres will be represented, whether it is country, rap, alternative, pop or even classical. It is always difficult to decide who is the best from each category, and this year will be no different, especially for the rap nominees.

Shawn Carter, more commonly known as Jay-Z, is one rapper who has graced the rap world with his lyrics and beats for a long time now. He has already released several albums and his new two-disc set, "Blueprint 2," hit the shelves in November 2002.

"Blueprint 2" was produced by Roc-A-Fella Records and nominated for Best Rap Album for the 2002-03 year. Its competition include Missy Elliott's "Under Construction," 50 Cent's "Get Rich or Die Tryin'," Outkast's "Speakerboxxx/The Love Below" and The Roots' "Phenology."

The two discs in "Blueprint 2" are titled "The Gift" and "The Curse." Both include a variety of beats and tones that strengthen the disc's entertainment value. Jay-Z mixes his talent with several featured guests.

Notorious B.I.G. helps jump-start "The Gift" with the song, "Have a Dream." Beyonce Knowles' vocals in "'03 Bonnie and Clyde" and Sean Paul in "What They Gonna Do" also add to the repertoire. Jay-Z even leans a bit towards the rock genre with Lemmy Kravitz in "Guns and Roses."

The album contains the stereotypical rap contents of sex, drug and name-calling but adds enough variety to make it more original than a mundane rap recording.

"Blueprint 2" is not one of Jay-Z's stronger albums, but it still contains the charm and talent that got him where he is today.

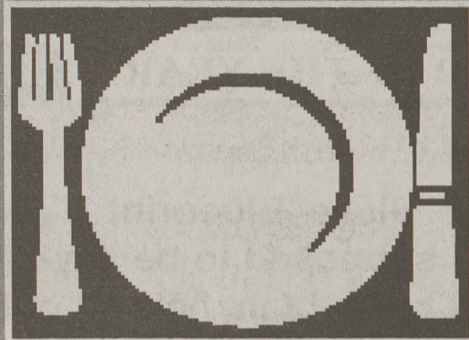
Jay-Z is also included in several other Grammy categories. His appearance on Beyonce's "Crazy in Love" is nominated for Best Rap/Sung Collaboration. In the same category, he is also nominated for his collaboration with the Neptunes on "Frontin'," featuring Pharrell Williams. His song "Excuse Me Miss" is also in the running for Best Rap Song.

Jay-Z has a way of combining the newer rap styles with some of the tried-and-true techniques and voices of past rappers that give him a good chance of winning a couple of awards.



— Christina Teichman

See Beat on page 9A



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